

Collection Development Guidelines

This collection development policy was created to serve as a guideline in the acquisition and selection of library materials and in the overall collection development process. The policy assists the NFCC Library in doing its part to realize the mission of the college. The collection development policy also informs library patrons of the nature and scope of the collection and how decisions are made concerning the selection process. The policy is reviewed periodically.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Marshall Hamilton Library actively supports the curriculum and mission of North Florida Community College by providing access to quality learning resources and instructional services. The library promotes the use of electronic resources and seeks to provide its users with the competencies necessary to pursue their goals and to become productive members of the community. The Marshall Hamilton Library serves both on campus and remote access users. The Library enriches not only the college community but also NFCC's entire six-county district.

PURPOSE

The North Florida Community College Library Collection Development Policy is designed to provide a policy for the systematic development of Library collections. The Library strives to maintain a collection of print and non-print resources sufficient in number and quality to meet the academic research and classroom needs of students and faculty.

PROFILE OF THE NFCC COMMUNITY

North Florida Community College is an accredited two year public community college established by the legislature in 1959 to serve the educational needs of the rural counties of Madison, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Suwannee and Taylor. The campus of over 100 acres is located in Madison, Florida, 56 miles east of Tallahassee.

Based on the *Florida Estimates of Population 2012*, the six county area serves an estimated population of 97,002. The racial distribution of the six county area is 65.5% white and 35.4% non-white (*Florida County Rankings, 2010*). The population is predominantly rural; the largest town, Perry, comprises an estimated 7,037 individuals (*Florida Estimates of Population, 2012*). The median age of the population in the six county area is 35-54 years, and the average per capita income is \$ 19,827 (*Florida County Rankings, 2010*). Two of the counties

(Hamilton with 29.3% poverty rate and Lafayette with 25.6 % poverty rate) rank among Florida's five poorest counties.

The NFCC Library's closest academic neighbors are in Tallahassee (FSU, FAMU, TCC) Jacksonville (JU, UNF), Lake City (FGC) and Valdosta, Georgia (VSU, Wiregrass Technical College). Other libraries located within the service area are the public library systems; Suwannee River Regional Library, Wilderness Coast Regional Library, and Three Rivers Regional Library.

The NFCC Library occupies a central location on the Madison campus and houses print, non-print, and electronic resources. The library is a handicapped accessible facility. The Library, renovated in 1997, provides comfortable and attractive surroundings for use of the collections and encourages casual reading and browsing as well as serious research.

The Library's clientele is composed of the student body, the faculty, administrators and staff, and residents of the six county district. The student body is a diverse group both in personal and education goals. There are full-time students attending college transfer programs during the day, evening and online, students with full-time jobs attending evening classes on a part-time basis and online, students enrolled in technical and vocational programs, and high school students enrolled in dual enrollment programs. There are also those who are enrolled in non-credit continuing education courses. As of the 2012-13 school year there were 2016 individuals enrolled and 919.54 FTE. The college employs 107 full-time employees. Thirty-one of these are full time faculty.

AFFILIATIONS

In addition, the NFCC Library is an active member in the Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) which coordinates access to individual library resources for all 39 colleges and universities in Florida. The library automation system Aleph Integrated Library System is used by all higher education in Florida. FLVC also provides access to a number of on-line databases. NFCC is a member of the Northeast Florida Library Information Network (NEFLIN), Florida Library Information Network (FLIN).

The two public higher education systems in Florida, the State University System and the College System, have developed an agreement for library reciprocal borrowing. The agreement can be found at http://www.fcla.edu/FCLAinfo/sus/borrowing_agreement.html.

SELECTION POLICY

The library mission statement provides the framework for selection. The major responsibility and top priority of the library lies with the teaching programs, both academic and vocational. It is the policy of the NFCC Library to solicit material requests from faculty members for materials that will be beneficial to students enrolled in their classes. The NFCC Faculty shares in the responsibility to shape collections in their subject area. The library also endeavors to serve the need of the faculty, either by purchasing (if the materials can also be used by the student body) or by securing through interlibrary loan those resources needed for faculty study and research. Although at a lower priority, the library services the entire community through the purchase of recreational, cultural and general informational materials.

The North Florida Community College Library encourages the access to information for all of its patrons. The Library follows and supports the Library Bill of Rights [Appendix C], Statement on Professional Ethics [Appendix D], Freedom to View Statement [Appendix E], and the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association [Appendix F]. No materials will be excluded from consideration because of the race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, political or social view of the material, the author, or the intended audience. Individual items, which in and of themselves may be controversial or offensive to some patrons, may appropriately be selected if their inclusion supports coursework and contributes to the range of viewpoints increasing the effectiveness of the library collection as a whole.

If an individual or groups questions specific library materials, that person may fill out a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" [Appendix B]. The request will be considered by the Director of Library Services and the Dean of Academic Affairs.

The quality of content and the fulfillment of academic curricular needs are the first criteria against which any potential item is evaluated. Reviews from sources such as **Booklist** and **Library Journal** are considered as well as recommendations from the faculty. Specific considerations in choosing individual items include some or all of the following:

- The strength of present holdings in same or similar subject area. The recommendation of the Coordinator of Library Services (based on reference questions and course syllabus) is crucial in gauging need in specific areas of the collection.
- The cost of the item title and availability of funds. There is no limit on the cost of materials if the other criteria (quality, usefulness in instructional program,

etc.) are met. The purchase of expensive books or sets may be postponed until a new budget year based on immediate need and use.

- The authoritativeness of the author or reputation of the publisher.
- The lasting value of the content.
- The appropriateness of level of treatment. Materials will be selected at a level appropriate to the needs of the students and faculty. NFCC Library follows the *American Library Association and Research Libraries Conspectus* guidelines for collecting intensity levels (Appendix A). Academic subject materials are generally collected on the 2B level and vocational materials are generally collected on the 2A intensity level. Basic reference works and tools are considered of primary importance to the collection and are maintained at a currency and level necessary to meet the diverse informational needs of the community. Research level material is not purchased since it does not support the academic or vocational curriculum. Items of this nature can be acquired through inter-library location, and /or by travel to one of the nearby state university systems.

Other guidelines followed are:

- Textbooks are not normally purchased, the exceptions being those considered classics in their field, or when the textbook is the best source of information on a particular topic. New textbooks will be accepted as gifts with the approval of the faculty in that field.
- Popular fiction having short-term interest among readers will generally be acquired through a lease program. Leased items that have high circulation will be considered for purchase. Items that are prizewinners, established literary works and new works receiving critical acclaim in the literary field, especially those works that support literature course offerings will be purchased.
- The library will generally buy only one copy of any item. Exceptions can be made for high demand items or if material needed is on reserve.
- The library acquires high use books in hardbound library edition binding whenever possible. In other instances when there is an option, the choice is based on expected use, cost differential, and lasting value of content.
- The library acquires primarily English language reference and research sources, except for foreign language dictionaries and materials that are used in the teaching or learning of foreign languages.
- **Lost, stolen, damaged or worn materials may be replaced, however, the majority of selections are current publications.** The library recognizes the need for retrospective purchases, and systematically uses standard bibliographies and other evaluation tools to locate and fill gaps in the

collection. The selection criteria mentioned previously shall be applied to these items.

- In instances where the cost of an item is high and/or the item is hard to obtain, and the demand is low, the option of interlibrary loan should be considered.

Selection is primarily item-by-item. The library solicits recommendations for materials from faculty, administrators, librarians, staff and students. The librarians consider requests received and reviews of items found in professional journals, flyers and announcements. Standing orders may be maintained, dependent upon the cost of yearly updates and convenience of ordering. Final selection is the responsibility of the Director.

NONPRINT FORMATS

Materials in the compact disc and digital video recordings (DVD) formats are the non-print formats actively collected. The above guidelines are observed with the following additional considerations:

- Closed-captioned versions are preferred over non-captioned.
- Original versions or “director’s cut” of movies are preferred, i.e. restored, non-colorized, sub-titled not dubbed, etc.
- Public performance rights are obtained if economically feasible.
- Videos deemed to be of literary value may be purchased in foreign languages if subtitled.
- Popular movies are collected.
- CDs and DVDs are not censored or labeled beyond what appears on the printed cover. No additional restrictions are placed on the age of video patrons, as the primary clientele is adult. Video movies with an MPAA rating of “X” or “NC-17” are generally not within the scope of this collection.
- Audiobooks are collected in a compact disc format. These materials are acquired through a lease program. This is a very small collection and materials are primarily selected through faculty, staff, and student request only.
- Downloadable eBooks are collected. Both fiction and research materials are considered for purchase in this format.
- Faculty is asked to preview any video costing over \$100.00 before requesting. Previews are generally available for videos in this price range.

REFERENCE COLLECTION

The NFCC reference collection is designed to support the curriculum of the college and the general needs of its patrons. In general, “reference books” are distinguished from other books because they are refereed to for brief, factual information rather than for in-depth study. A reference collection also serves to facilitate the use of heavily accessed materials by making them available in a

central location. The reference collection does not circulate in order that these tools may be available to all library users during library hours. The above guidelines are observed when adding items to this collection.

JOSEPH A. AKERMAN, JR. FLORIDA COLLECTION

The NFCC Library maintains a small collection of books about Florida and books written by Florida authors. Materials dealing with all geographical areas are acquired for the general collection. However, an effort is made to formally collect materials that provide current and historical information about the state of Florida. The previously mentioned print selection guidelines apply to this collection as well.

ELECTRONIC SOURCES

NFCC Library defines electronic sources as Internet sites and online databases. Computer software is not actively collected. The library does not select nor catalog Internet sites due to budget and staff constraints. Selection criteria for online databases are included in the Serials portion of this policy.

SERIALS

All serials – magazines, journals, newspapers, periodicals – are purchased via subscription. Serials are issued in print, non-print, and electronic formats. All formats will be considered in the library's purchase and/or access decisions. Since it is becoming more cost-efficient to purchase electronic access for serials instead of acquisition through print subscription, this method of delivery will be chosen when fiscally prudent.

Electronic databases are generally selected by the CCLA Database Selection Process for use statewide.

(http://www.ccla.lib.fl.us/docs/reports/db_selection_guidelines.pdf)*. When the Library subscribes individually to the selection criteria is much the same as that of the print collection. Faculty suggestions are encouraged. In addition the following criteria apply:

- Whether the database supports the curriculum
- Demand/usage of database
- Annual cost of the subscription
- The types of reviews the database received from professional journals.

**(At the time of this update, FLVC has not formally adopted selection guidelines for electronic resources other than those of CCLA.)*

Periodically the Director and the Coordinator of Library Resources evaluate the current subscriptions according to the following criteria:

November 21, 2013

- Support of academic programs, including program accreditation requirements.
- Usage.
- Intended audience.
- Cost of subscription, storage, and access..
- Full-text availability via electronic means.

Serials that no longer meet the needs of the college curriculum may be dropped from the subscription list. Replacement serials are added, if necessary, that better meet the needs of the courses. Faculty is encouraged to requests serials that meet the needs of their curriculum. Many leisure periodical titles are purchased for students since many academic titles are available in the Library databases.

GIFTS POLICY

The NFCC Library uses the same criteria as that governing the selection of purchased items in evaluating gift materials chosen for inclusion in the Library's collection. Materials must be in good physical condition. The library does not provide any estimation of value for any donated item, but will provide a letter of acknowledgment describing any donation that is accepted upon request. Once donated items are added to the Library collections, they become the property of the NFCC Library and cannot be returned to the donor. The Library reserves the right to dispose of materials not chosen for inclusion in the collection.

EVALUATION POLICY

In order to determine how well the library meets its stated goals and objectives, the NFCC Library will conduct internal evaluations to provide an objective perception of the library's collection. The evaluation process will determine the strengths and weaknesses of the collection, define the true scope of the collection, and check the effectiveness of the library. A combination of evaluation techniques will be used such as examination of materials, checklist, comparative statistics, and institutional effectiveness reports. In assessing the collection, FVLC-generated reports and in-house reports, such as annual circulation by call number and annual acquisitions by class, are used.

PRESERVATION AND REPLACEMENT OF MATERIALS

Library staff is informed of the proper care and handling of library materials. Temperature and humidity controls and cleanliness are essential for maintenance of library materials. Decisions are made regarding the replacement of lost, damaged, missing, or worn-out materials, based on the following criteria:

- Does the material being replaced meet the general library collection policy?
- Does the frequency of use justify replacement?
- Is the item used for class reserve reading or is it on a faculty recommended reading list?
- Is the title in print or available from online out-of-print sources?
- Can the item be rebound and maintain its usefulness and demand?

WITHDRAWALS POLICY

Materials are withdrawn from the collection in order to maintain a current, active, and useful collection. Librarians evaluate the collection continually for this purpose and consult instructors with expertise in the relevant disciplines for advice concerning relevancy of the materials.

Materials may be deleted on the basis of any of the following criteria:

- Materials too badly worn or damaged to be repaired, or with missing pages.
- Books that are earlier editions superseded by a later edition that are still in the collection.
- Books that are exact duplicates of another book.
- Materials that are outdated or ones that are no longer useful for reference.
- Materials that do not fit the scope of the collection.
- There are other books/materials in the collection that fulfill the same need more adequately.
- Audiovisual materials that are damaged, worn, or replaced by newer technology.
- Books that have not circulated in the past 10 years.
- Lost or missing items.

Serials may be removed from the collection for the following reasons:

- Lack of space and/or replacement by microfilm.
- Incomplete and short runs of a title, particularly when the title is not received currently.
- The information is no longer relevant.
- Back issues can be found in databases.
- The serial title no longer supports the curriculum.

Exceptions may be made for:

- Materials published by a local author.
- Local history or archival materials.
- Special collection comprehensive in nature (such as the Florida Collection).

APPENDIX A

Collection Depth Indicator Definitions

▶ 0 OUT OF SCOPE

The library does not intentionally collect materials in any format for this subject.

▶ 1 MINIMAL INFORMATION LEVEL

Collections that support minimal inquiries about this subject and include a very limited collection of general resources, including monographs and reference works. Periodicals directly dealing with this topic and in-depth electronic information resources are not collected.

The collection should be frequently and systematically reviewed for currency of information. Superseded editions and titles containing outdated information should be withdrawn. Classic or standard retrospective materials may be retained.

▶ 1a MINIMAL INFORMATION LEVEL, UNEVEN COVERAGE

- Few selections and an unsystematic representation of the subject
- Supports limited, specific service needs
- Consistently maintained even though coverage is limited

▶ 1b MINIMAL INFORMATION LEVEL, FOCUSED COVERAGE

- Few selections, but a systematic representation of the subject
- Includes basic authors, some core works and a spectrum of points of view
- Consistently maintained

▶ 2 BASIC INFORMATION LEVEL

Collections that introduce and define a subject, indicate the varieties of information available elsewhere, and support the needs of general library users through the first two years of college instruction include:

- A limited collection of general monographs and reference tools
- A limited collection of representative general periodicals
- Defined access to a limited collection of owned or remotely-accessed electronic bibliographic tools, texts, data sets, journals, etc.

The collection should be frequently and systematically reviewed for currency of information. Superseded editions and titles containing outdated information should be withdrawn. Classic or standard retrospective materials may be retained.

▶ 2a BASIC INFORMATION LEVEL, INTRODUCTORY

Limited collections of introductory monographs and reference tools that include:

- Basic explanatory works

- Histories of the development of the topic
- General works about the field and its important personages
- General encyclopedias, periodical indexes and statistical sources

▶ 2b BASIC INFORMATION LEVEL, ADVANCED

Collections of general periodicals and a broader and more in-depth array of introductory monographs and reference tools that include:

- Basic explanatory works
- Histories of the development of the topic
- General works about the field and its important personages
- A broader array of general encyclopedias, periodical indexes, and statistical sources
- A limited collection of representative general periodicals
- Defined access to a limited collection of owned or remotely accessed electronic bibliographic tools, texts, data sets, journals, etc.

This collection is sufficient to support the basic informational and recreational reading needs of an educated general public or students through the first two years of college.

▶ 3 STUDY OR INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT LEVEL

Collections that provide information about a subject in a systematic way, but at a level of less than research intensity and support the needs of general library users through college and beginning graduate instruction include:

- An extensive collection of general monographs and reference works and selected specialized monographs and reference works
- An extensive collection of general periodicals and a representative collection of specialized periodicals
- Limited collections of appropriate materials in languages other than the primary language of the collection and the country, for example, materials to aid in learning a language for non-native speakers or literature in the original language, such as German poetry in German or Spanish history in Spanish
- Extensive collections of the works of well-known authors and selections from the works of lesser-known authors
- Defined access to a broad collection of owned or remotely-accessed electronic resources, including bibliographic tools, texts, data sets, journals, etc.

The collection should be systematically reviewed for currency of information and for assurance that essential and important information is retained, including significant numbers of retrospective materials.

▶ 3a BASIC STUDY OR INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT LEVEL

Resources adequate for imparting and maintaining knowledge about the primary topics of a subject area that include:

- A high percentage of the most important literature or core works in the field
- An extensive collection of general monographs and reference works

- An extensive collection of general periodicals and indexes/abstracts
- Other than those in the primary collection language, materials are limited to learning materials for non-native speakers and representative well-known authors in the original language, primarily for language education
- Defined access to appropriate electronic resources

This collection supports undergraduate courses, as well as the independent study needs of the lifelong learner.

▶ **3b INTERMEDIATE STUDY OR INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT LEVEL**

Resources adequate for imparting and maintaining knowledge about more specialized subject areas which provide more comprehensive coverage of the subject with broader and more in-depth materials that include:

- A high percentage of the most important literature or core works in the field, including retrospective resources
- An extensive collection of general monographs and reference works and selected specialized monographs and reference works
- An extensive collection of general periodicals and a representative collection of specialized periodicals and indexes/abstracts
- A selection of resources in other languages, including well-known authors in the original language
- Defined access to a broad range of specialized electronic resources

This collection supports upper division undergraduate courses.

▶ **3c ADVANCED STUDY OR INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT LEVEL**

Resources adequate for imparting and maintaining knowledge about all aspects of the topic which are more extensive than the intermediate level but less than those needed for doctoral and independent research that include:

- An almost complete collection of core works including significant numbers of retrospective materials and resources
- A broader collection of specialized works by lesser-known, as well as well-known authors
- An extensive collection of general and specialized monographs and reference works
- An extensive collection of general and specialized periodicals and indexes/abstracts
- A selection of resources in other languages, including well-known authors in the original language and a selection of subject-specific materials in appropriate languages.
- Defined access to a broad range of specialized electronic resources

This collection supports master's degree level programs as well as other specialized inquiries.

▶ **4 RESEARCH LEVEL**

Collections that contain the major published source materials required for doctoral study and independent research include:

- A very extensive collection of general and specialized monographs and reference

works

- A very extensive collection of general and specialized periodicals
- Extensive collections of appropriate materials in languages other than the primary language of the country and collection
- Extensive collections of the works of both well-known and lesser-known authors
- Defined access to a very extensive collection of owned or remotely accessed electronic resources, including bibliographic tools, texts, data sets, journals, etc.

Older material is retained and systematically preserved to serve the needs of historical research.

▶ 5 **COMPREHENSIVE LEVEL**

Collections in a specifically defined field of knowledge that strive to be exhaustive as far as is reasonably possible (i.e., "special collections"), in all applicable languages include:

- Exhaustive collections of published materials
- Very extensive manuscript collections
- Very extensive collections in all other pertinent formats

Older material is retained and systematically preserved to serve the needs of historical research. A comprehensive level collection may serve as a national or international resource.

APPENDIX B

Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Author: _____

Title _____

Publisher (if known): _____

Request initiated by _____

Name

Telephone no.

Address

Complainant represents: Himself/Herself _____ Organization _____

If organization, give name: _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

_____ Book _____ AV Material _____ Magazine

_____ Newspaper _____ Electronic information/network (please specify)

2. Specify what concerns you about the resource. _____

3. Have you examined the entire resource? _____

4. What resource would you recommend in its place? _____

5. What action would you like the library to take about this resource? _____

Signature of Complainant

Date

APPENDIX C

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948.
Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980,
inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996,
by the ALA Council.

APPENDIX D

Statement on Professional Ethics, 1981

Code of Ethics

- I. Librarians must provide the highest level of service through appropriate and usefully organized collections, fair and equitable circulation and service policies, and skillful, accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests for assistance.
- II. Librarians must resist all efforts by groups or individuals to censor library materials.
- III. Librarians must protect each user's right to privacy with respect to information sought or received, and materials consulted, borrowed, or acquired.
- IV. Librarians must adhere to the principles of due process and equality of opportunity in peer relationships and personnel actions.
- V. Librarians must distinguish clearly in their actions and statements between their personal philosophies and attitudes and those of an institution or professional body.
- VI. Librarians must avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues, or the employing institution.

Adopted June 30, 1981, by ALA Membership and ALA Council

APPENDIX E

Freedom to View Statement

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the [First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States](#). In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed by the ALA Council January 10, 1990

APPENDIX F

The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label “controversial” views, to distribute lists of “objectionable” books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be “protected” against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small

audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings. The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but also why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that

may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any expression the prejudgment of a label characterizing it or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will

occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.